PART V

CROPS

Major Crops:

Because of specialization in livestock farming, dairying and poultry raising, a major part of the cropland is used for growing feed crops. About 69 percent of the cropland in 1954 was harvested as hay and grass silage. Another 22 percent was used for feed grains. Most of the feed crops are consumed directly on the livestock farms, or are marketed in immediate localities to dairy, beef, poultry and turkey producers. In 1954, the 55,593 acres of harvested cropland within Clark County were planted to the following crops listed in order of acreage importance: hay and grass silage, oats, tree fruits, nuts and grapes, vegetables, barley, wheat, field corn and potatoes.

Crop Trends

The crop history of any farming region reflects changes in marketing conditions and methods of farming. Largely as a result of rapid population growth

Total Acres of Land Harvested, 1954
55,593 Acres

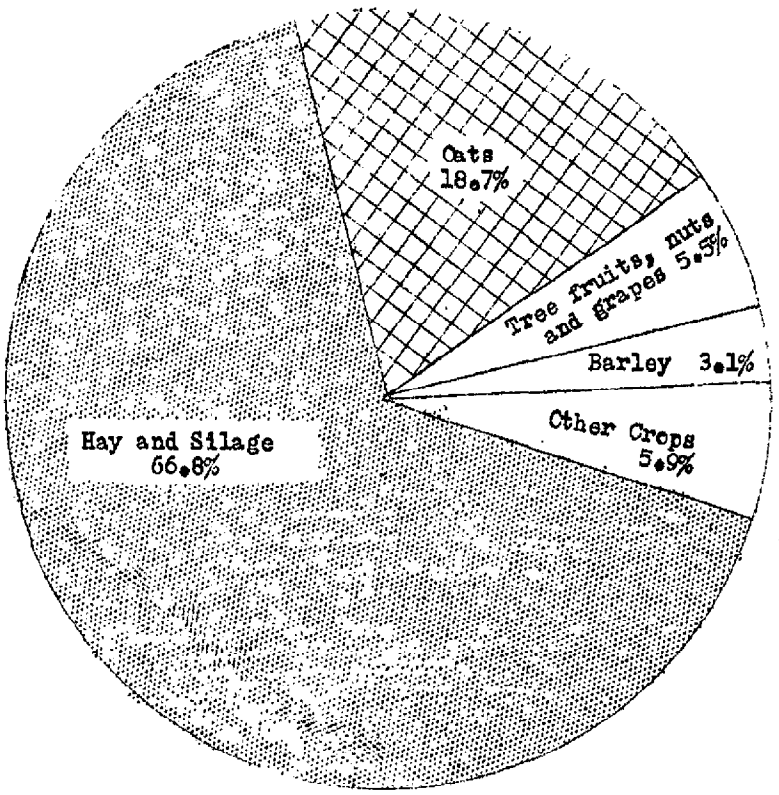

Figure 10. Percent of Total Cropland in Leading Crops
Clark County, 1954.
(Based on U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1954)

in the immediate trade area and changed market outlets, Clark County agriculture has changed since 1939 in types and amounts of crops and products produced. Changed crop patterns also result from farmers' experiments with various crops and types of farming for specific markets.

Increased specialization in dairy, beef and poultry farming has caused a marked increase in certain forage crops since 1939. Acreages of clover, timothy and alfalfa hay, oats, barley and rye have been increased. The growing of wheat, corn, potatoes, wild hay and oat hay has trended sharply downward since 1939. Wheat grown for cash sales dropped from 1,510 acres in 1939 to only 480 in 1955. Field corn cultivated for grain on 770 acres in 1939 was harvested from only 30 acres in 1955. Wild hay dropped to only 1,050 tons in 1954. A large drop in potato acreage has occurred but yields per acre and production have been increased.

Specialty cash crops of berries and vegetables and nursery products have been expanded in recent years, while tree fruits and filbert nuts have been decreased. Strawberry production was over four times greater in 1955 than in 1939, and blackberries and raspberries have gained greatly in acreage and production. Commercial vegetables for the immediate urban fresh market and local processors are now in greater production than in earlier years, being 3,140 acres in 1954 compared with only 550 acres in 1939. Nursery and greenhouse products have gained considerably. Prunes and filberts, specialties for which Clark County has led the state since 1939, have declined sharply. Bearing prune and plum trees numbered less than 75,000 in 1954, whereas there were over 582,000 in 1940.

Hay and Silage Crops

Since early settlement the most important crop from the acreage and on-farm use standpoint has been hay. All types of hay and silage have ranged between a harvested area of 34,000 to 37,000 acres per year since 1939. Clover and timothy are the most common types, generally grown in mixture. Over 1,200 farms, or one-fourth of all the farms in Clark County, harvest clover and timothy. In 1954 Clark County ranked fifth among Washington counties in clover and timothy acreage. About 140 farms had a surplus for sale and over 3,000 tons were marketed locally in 1954. Clover and timothy reached a peak of 16,300 acres yielding a total of 29,400 tons in 1944. The crop in 1939 was smallest--8,300 acres which produced 14,900 tons. Soil conservation practices in recent years and using rotations of clover and grain have been factors in the increase of clover hay.

Oats, and other grains, cut green for hay, is the second major type of hay, ranging between a high of 18,000 acres in 1939 and a low of 5,000 acres in 1954. Grain hay was cut by 2,000 farms in 1949 in contrast to only 630 in 1954, indicating a sharp downward trend in putting up grain hay.

Alfalfa hay has been gaining steadily as one of the major forage crops. In recent years about 430 farms have been putting alfalfa up for feed and another 100 producers have been selling a surplus totaling about 2,300 tons a year. Alfalfa acreage went up from 3,000 acres in 1939 to an estimated 4,900 in 1955.

Silage making is a rapidly growing farm practice to utilize green forage crops more efficiently and to lessen losses in hay quality from damp weather at harvest time. Numerous farms have added silage cutters and installed silage pits and silos in recent years. There were 235 farms putting up silage in 1954, which was 100 more than enumerated in 1949. Silage was harvested from over 4,000 acres in 1954 compared with about 1,400 acres in 1949.

Table 16.- Clover-Timothy Hay and Alfalfa Hay Acreage, Yield and Productioh Clark County, 1939-1955.

CLOVER-TIMOTHY ALFALFA

Year	Alfalfa hay			Clover and Timothy Hay		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)
1939	8,300	1.8	14,900	3,000	2.7	8,100
1940	9,200	1.7	16,000	3,300	2.8	9,220
1941	10,000	2.0	20,200	3,500	3.1	10,900
1942	10,500	2.1	21,600	3,700	3.4	12,580
1943	10,700	1.9	20,400	4,300	2.7	11,610
1944	11,300	2.0	22,700	4,200	3.2	13,600
1945	11,300	1.7	19,700	4,100	2.8	11,600
1946	11,100	1.9	20,600	3,900	2.7	10,600
1947	10,500	1.9	20,000	3,600	2.5	9,100
1948	11,200	2.0	22,100	3,800	3.0	11,300
1949	11,100	1.6	17,800	3,300	2.3	7,700
1950	10,000	2.1	21,000	3,600	2.4	8,600
1951	11,800	1.5	17,700	3,800	2.0	7,600
1952	10,800	.9	9,700	4,000	3.5	14,000
1953	14,100	1.8	25,400	4,800	2.2	10,700
1954	16,300	1.8	29,400	4,600	2.6	11,900
1955	15,800	1.8	28,300	4,900	2.6	12,700

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agric., AMS, Estimates Division, State of Washington, 1939-1955.

Oats, Other Small Grains and Corn

Grass and legume feed crops are supplemented heavily in Clark County by threshed oats, barley, wheat and field corn. These grain feeds are highly important to the dairy, livestock and poultry industry. Clark County leads all other western Washington counties in production of barley and field corn silage and it is second in wheat and fourth in oats.

Oats is the most important grain crop, being grown by nearly one-fourth of the farms in the county. Oat grain acreage has ranged between 8,200 and 10,600 acres per year since 1939. In recent crop years nearly 170,000 bushels of threshed oats have been sold in the local and regional grain market. Barley ranks second in acreage and production among the small grains. About 150 farms harvested barley and the acreage has moved upward from 740 acres to 2,110 acres since 1939. Nearly one-half of the production is sold on the feed grain market, over 25,000 bushels being marketed per year.

Table 17.- Wheat and Oats: Acreage, Yield and Production
Clark County, 1939-1955

Year	All Wheat			Oats (for grain)		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	1,510	25.0	37,750	8,200	36.5	299,300
1940	1,400	17.9	25,000	8,500	33.0	280,500
1941	1,300	30.0	39,000	8,800	37.0	325,600
1942	1,440	34.0	48,960	9,500	44.0	418,000
1943	340	33.5	11,400	9,700	46.0	446,200
1944	440	26.7	11,730	10,500	43.0	451,500
1945	460	26.2	12,070	8,900	36.0	320,000
1946	500	26.8	13,400	8,200	40.0	328,000
1947	600	27.9	16,730	8,200	42.0	344,400
1948	500	29.4	14,680	9,500	33.0	313,500
1949	1,080	25.1	27,120	8,800	38.0	334,400
1950	620	24.4	15,140	9,100	38.0	346,000
1951	680	23.5	15,990	10,500	37.0	388,500
1952	670	26.6	17,790	9,100	45.0	409,500
1953	190	20.4	3,870	9,100	44.0	400,400
1954	590	24.8	14,620	10,600	37.0	392,200
1955	480	29.2	14,010	9,600	49.0	470,000

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Table 18.- Spring Wheat and Winter Wheat
Clark County, 1939-1955

Year	Spring Wheat			Winter Wheat		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	140	16.6	2,330	1,370	25.9	35,420
1940	200	15.0	3,000	1,400	17.9	25,000
1941	150	28.0	4,200	1,150	30.3	34,800
1942	100	30.0	3,000	1,340	34.3	45,960
1943	80	20.0	1,600	260	37.7	9,800
1944	160	21.9	3,500	280	29.4	8,230
1945	200	22.0	4,400	260	29.5	7,670
1946	190	22.1	4,200	310	30.0	9,300
1947	170	20.0	3,400	430	31.0	13,330
1948	80	18.5	1,480	420	31.4	13,200
1949	280	24.0	6,720	800	25.5	20,400
1950	400	26.3	10,520	220	21.0	4,620
1951	380	25.5	9,690	300	21.0	6,300
1952	300	26.0	7,800	370	27.0	9,990
1953	40	18.0	720	150	21.0	3,150
1954	110	26.0	2,860	480	24.5	11,760
1955	210	23.0	4,830	270	34.0	9,180

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Table 19.- Barley and Rye: Acreage, Yield and Production
Clark County, 1939-1955

Year	Barley			Rye		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	740	24.0	17,760	100	17.0	1,700
1940	860	27.0	23,220	70	14.5	1,015
1941	970	30.0	29,100	180	12.4	2,240
1942	1,180	33.0	38,940	170	9.0	1,530
1943	1,120	32.0	35,840	50	13.0	650
1944	930	37.0	34,410	10	14.0	140
1945	920	35.0	32,200	10	22.0	220
1946	840	39.0	32,760	10	21.0	210
1947	950	32.0	30,400	40	19.0	760
1948	1,130	32.0	36,160	110	22.0	2,420
1949	1,300	30.0	39,000	80	18.8	1,500
1950	1,430	35.0	50,050	60	14.7	880
1951	1,400	33.0	46,200	50	29.0	1,450
1952	1,250	35.0	43,750	140	14.5	2,030
1953	1,610	32.0	51,520	110	13.2	1,450
1954	1,850	31.0	57,350	90	32.0	2,880
1955	2,110	38.0	80,180	120	25.0	3,000

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Table 20.- Corn and Potatoes: Acreage, Yield and Production
Clark County, 1939-1955

Year	Field Corn (for grain) 1/			Potatoes		
	Acreage (acres)	Yield (bushel per acre)	Production (tons)	Acreage (acres)	Yield (tons per acre)	Production (tons)
1939	770	29.0	22,330	1,441	4.1	5,770
1940	620	35.0	21,700	1,500	3.9	5,800
1941	470	32.0	15,040	1,400	3.9	5,500
1942	340	24.5	8,330	1,000	4.0	4,000
1943	240	46.0	11,040	800	4.4	3,500
1944	140	26.0	3,640	650	3.2	2,100
1945	90	42.0	3,780	600	4.5	2,700
1946	90	41.0	3,690	700	5.0	3,500
1947	120	41.0	4,920	400	6.9	2,750
1948	110	40.9	4,500	700	5.7	4,000
1949	190	36.1	6,850	800	6.2	4,950
1950	180	39.7	7,150	750	4.1	3,050
1951	100	29.0	2,900	750	4.9	3,700
1952	70	29.0	2,030	550	7.8	4,300
1953	20	42.0	840	550	8.4	4,600
1954	20	26.5	530	475	9.3	4,400
1955	30	31.0	930	520	10.6	5,500

1/ Does not include field corn cut green for silage.
Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division
State of Washington

Wheat was an important pioneer crop in Clark County. However, it has declined from its former position in the 1920's and 1930's. There were less than 100 producers in 1954 and the crop was grown only on small fields. All wheat in the county totaled only 590 acres. Two-thirds of the recent annual crop of less than 15,000 bushels was spring wheat. Most of the crop is consumed locally as feed grain or grain hay on poultry and livestock farms.

Field corn and rye are other minor grain feed crops. Corn for grain has dropped off considerably, with only 30 acres being harvested in this manner in 1955. Since 1950 nearly all field corn has been cut as silage. Most field corn is consumed as silage, fodder and grain on farms where grown. A small annual crop of rye is another locally consumed forage crop. Rye acreage has fluctuated between 10 acres and 180 acres in 1941.

Potatoes

As a popular pioneer food crop for local use and as a commercial crop, potatoes have decreased about two-thirds in acreage and nearly half in production since 1939. Yields, however, have been more than doubled. In 1954 over 750 farms in the county grew potatoes for home use and sale. About 4,400 tons or 82,000 hundred-pound sacks were produced, most of which were consumed locally or fed to livestock. Competition in the Portland market with potatoes from irrigated areas of eastern Washington and Oregon has contributed to the decline. A few commercial growers still utilize the rich flood plain islands in the Columbia River. Yields per acre have been greatly increased by use of fertilizers and insecticides. Production varies sharply because in some years the Columbia River floods the alluvial bottoms where commercial potatoes are grown. Much of the production is in early potatoes.

Tree Fruits and Filberts

Clark is the leading orchard growing area of western Washington. It leads all Washington counties in filbert production and was the second ranking producer of plums and prunes in 1954. The total county acreage of 3,046 acres in orchards with more than 20 trees is sixth highest in the state.

Clark County has long been noted as an area specializing in Italian prunes for the canning market. In 1954 there were 625 farms growing plums and prunes. Small and large orchards are distributed over the sloping land overlooking the Columbia River and the higher terraces of the Washougal, Lackamas, Salmon Creek and Lewis River Valleys. Prunes and plums far outnumber other fruit species such as apples, pears and cherries. The number of bearing prune and plum trees has dwindled sharply since 1940 and new plantings are few compared with the rate of planting before 1930. There are two general causes of decline. One has been the residential expansion of the Vancouver area into surrounding orchard districts which had numerous commercial prune orchards. A second reason has been the replacement of prune trees with specialty field crops, berries and vegetables which yield a greater net cash return per acre.

Other deciduous tree fruit orchards have decreased since 1930. Apples, pears, cherries and peaches planted intermixed in small home-use orchards were at their greatest extent between 1900 and 1930. As the commercial tree fruit

industry began to concentrate in the irrigated valleys of eastern Washington, commercial production in Clark County declined, except for prunes. Most orchards remaining today are non-commercial.

Table 21.- Bearing Fruit Trees and Filbert Trees
Clark County, 1890-1954.

Year	Numbers of Bearing Trees					
	Apples	Cherries	Pears	Prunes & Plums	Peaches	Filberts
1890	26,918	2,560	4,241	13,074	1,595	---
1900	125,478	10,651	22,740	435,186	7,488	---
1910	104,374	9,052	17,153	387,942	3,275	---
1920	100,794	10,235	17,016	507,762	6,368	4,227
1930	55,305	9,289	20,629	865,405	4,238	24,428
1940	42,751	10,892	26,364	582,538	7,703	91,457
1950	22,892	7,395	17,258	98,177	8,967	108,596
1954 1/	13,592	4,799	16,574	72,293	5,746	84,538

1/ 1954 figures are for trees in orchards of 20 trees or more.

Sources: Washington Tree Fruits, Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, U.S.D.A. and Wash. State Dept. of Agric., Cooperating, 1952. U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Table 22.- Prunes and Plums: Number of Trees By Variety and By Year of Planting
Clark County

Year or Period	Number of Italian Prune Trees Planted	Number of Plum Trees Planted
1920 or before	132,720	50
1930-1921	43,400	5
1935-1931	9,400	5
1940-1936	3,630	5
1941	5	---
1942	---	---
1943	---	10
1944	---	5
1945	---	---
1946	1,875	---
1947	55	---
1948	---	---
Total trees planted	191,085	80

Source: Washington Tree Fruits, Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, USDA and Washington State Dept. of Agric., Cooperating, 1952.

Table 23.- Prunes and Plums: Trees of Bearing Age and Production Clark County, 1890-1955

Year	Bearing Trees	Year	Production (tons)
1890	13,047	1889	283
1900	435,186	1899	819
1910	387,942	1909	16,887
1920	507,762	1919	11,058
1930	865,405	1929	29,266
1940	582,538	1939	10,694
1950	98,177	1949	2,678
1955	72,293	1954	1,786

Source: Washington Tree Fruits, Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, USDA and Wash. State Dept. of Agric., 1952.

Clark County became the state's leading filbert growing area between 1920 and 1950. By 1950 Clark County had 1,312 growers managing a total of 108,000 bearing trees, nearly half of all the filberts in Washington. Several conditions were responsible for the sharp decline after 1950. Severe freezing weather in the winter of 1949-50 and again in the fall of 1955 damaged and killed a large number of trees. Increased competition with imported filberts from Mediterranean countries caused price declines. A survey in 1955 of the Oregon and Washington filbert industry showed a sharp drop in Clark County as well as in the Oregon counties. 1/ Clark County orchards went down to 77,000 trees, growers decreased to 700 and production was down to 694,000 pounds. The acreage in filbert orchards was down to 832 acres compared with 1,647 in 1949.

Vegetables

Being located near major urban markets, some valley farms in Clark County have been increasing crops of fresh and processor vegetables. Vegetables harvested for sale went up from 450 acres in 1949 to 570 acres in 1954. In the latter year there were about 80 commercial growers whose total sales of commercial vegetables exceeded $223,000. There has been a recently expanded production of green snap beans for processors in Vancouver and Portland. Green beans became the largest commercial vegetable crop in 1954, with 28 farms specializing in this crop. Leading truck crops which have varied from year to year included the following in 1954: snap beans, 175 acres; lettuce, 130; cabbage, 60 and cucumbers, 50. Other minor vegetables include sweet corn, asparagus, tomatoes, onions, green peas, carrots and rhubarb.

1/ USDA, AMS, Agric. Estimates Division, Oregon Experiment Station, Filbert Control Board, Oregon Filbert Commission, cooperating. "Report of 1955 Filbert Tree Survey" (mimeographed). Released by USDA, AMS, Dec. 8, 1955. 306 U.S. Court House, Portland, Oregon.

Table 24.- Vegetable Crops: Snap Beans, Cabbage, Cucumbers and Lettuce
Clark County, 1940-1955

Year	Snap Beans		Cabbage		Cucumbers		Lettuce	
	Acres	Prod. (tons)	Acres	Prod. (tons)	Acres	Prod. (tons)	Acres	Prod. (tons)
1940	1/	---	40	400	1/	---	200	1,175
1941	---	---	40	380	---	---	240	1,125
1942	---	---	30	200	---	---	175	1,175
1943	---	---	70	350	---	---	140	890
1944	---	---	45	200	---	---	80	550
1945	---	---	15	75	---	---	80	440
1946	---	---	25	125	---	---	135	655
1947	---	---	20	100	---	---	155	825
1948	5	10	20	105	150	525	190	1,350
1949	5	10	20	100	160	675	195	1,575
1950	10	20	10	65	70	350	200	1,700
1951	150	600	15	75	100	500	170	1,175
1952	75	450	45	235	75	375	205	1,350
1953	100	420	50	300	50	200	135	900
1954	200	1,200	60	500	100	350	130	900
1955	170	1,200	55	720	60	240	100	420

1/ Not available prior to 1948.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, AMS, Agric, Estimates Division, State of Washington.

Berries

Clark County is one of Washington's leading berry growing areas. Production has expanded considerably in recent years. Led by strawberries, raspberries and blackberries, total commercial berry acreage reached approximately 1,500 acres in 1955. In that year Clark County ranked fourth among Washington counties in strawberry production, was fifth in red raspberries, first in black raspberries and second in Boysenberries. Among all United States counties, Clark ranked 22nd as a producer of strawberries.

Mainly in small fields cultivated by over 250 growers, strawberries are the main cash berry crop. They are sold on thefresh market and to freezing processors in the immediate urban area of Washington and Oregon. Strawberry growing has increased steadily since a low point of 350 acres in 1944. Virtually all plantings are Marshall and Northwest varieties. Yields have ranged between 1 to nearly 3 tons per acre, varying with weather conditions. Extremely cold periods in 1949 and 1955 caused downward fluctuations in production.

With the exception of loganberries, all other types--blackberries, raspberries, Boysenberries and blueberries--have been increasing recently. Black raspberries, harvested from 100 to 75 acres per year, are a distinctive specialty sold to the jam and jelly industry and to processors who make vegetable stains used by meat inspectors and cheese graders.

Table 25.- Berry Crops: Strawberries, Blackberries and Boysenberries
Clark County, 1940-1955.

Year	Strawberries		Tame Blackberries		Boysenberries	
	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons
1940	700	840	5	10	40	70
1941	650	1,200	10	30	60	90
1942	600	900	10	30	70	90
1943	450	685	20	50	55	120
1944	350	300	50	150	45	100
1945	425	500	40	100	50	110
1946	450	750	60	150	50	115
1947	600	900	75	150	40	100
1948	650	1,200	100	180	40	90
1949	650	800	125	200	40	80
1950	600	750	125	90	30	25
1951	750	950	150	300	40	60
1952	700	1,400	100	385	25	40
1953	750	1,400	125	175	15	15
1954	900	1,950	125	390	35	36
1955	1,000	2,900	125	480	30	35

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agric., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division, State of Washington

Table 26.- Berry Crops: Raspberries
Clark County, 1940-1955.

Year	Red Raspberries		Black Raspberries	
	Acres	Tons	Acres	Tons
1940	100	125	20	35
1941	75	120	20	30
1942	120	150	20	35
1943	100	150	35	60
1944	130	120	25	20
1945	140	250	15	29
1946	200	325	30	40
1947	300	450	40	60
1948	350	500	70	100
1949	400	425	100	100
1950	300	250	75	60
1951	200	300	100	170
1952	125	375	100	160
1953	125	175	90	110
1954	250	350	90	125
1955	250	500	75	140

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agric., AMS, Agric. Estimates Division, State of Washington

Mint

In 1950 Clark County ranked fourth in Washington mint oil production. However, the growing of peppermint and spearmint crops from which mint oils are distilled has declined in importance since 1950. Mint farming was introduced in the 1930's on the river flood plains along the Columbia. By 1940 there were six growers with a combined acreage of 48 acres which yielded a total of 2,140 pounds of oil or about 43 pounds per acre. By 1950 there were nine growers producing 20,750 pounds of oil from a total of 500 acres. Decline started in the 1950's as a result of horticultural problems and disease infestations in mint fields. Production continued to shift to the irrigated Yakima Valley lands. By 1954 the mint acreage was down to 106 acres and oil production was down to 6,000 pounds compared with 428,000 pounds distilled in Yakima County.

Field Seed Crops

The growing of clover, alfalfa and fescue seed has been an expanding specialty. Since 1950 growers have increased to over 15 and total acreage in these and other field seed crops has gone up from 330 acres to 550. Red clover and fescue are the main seed crops. As producers of clover seed the growers of Clark County harvested a total of 26,000 pounds from 230 acres in 1954, ranking fifth in the state.

Nursery and Greenhouse Products: Flowers, Bulbs and Plants

There has been a recent expansion in nursery and greenhouse production. With a larger urban market and an increased rate of local residential construction, the demand for plants and flowering ornamentals has greatly increased. The county's nursery and florist industry in the Portland market area has expanded to twelfth rank in Washington State. Nursery operations and sales doubled between 1949 and 1954. Greenhouse businesses and total greenhouse space are nearly double that of 1939.

Table 27.- Horticultural Specialties: Nursery Products, Greenhouse Products, Flowers, Plants, Bulbs, Seeds, Mushrooms and other Special Plants.
Clark County, 1939-1954.

Census Year	Nursery Products (shrubs, trees and ornamentals)		Flowers and flowering plants, bulbs and seeds; vegetables, vegetable seeds, plants, mushrooms grown in fields and under glass for sale.		
	Acres Planted	Sales from Nurseries	Acres in open fields	Greenhouse space (square feet under glass)	Sales from farms during the year
1939	8	$ 3,379	80	35,564	$ 59,151
1944 1/	--	--	--	--	--
1949	14	$21,075	12	54,031	$140,478
1954	61	$57,094	16	63,384	$ 70,961

1/ No Census data are available for 1944.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture.